

Message Text

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PAGE 01 MOSCOW 13017 072028Z
ACTION EUR-12

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FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1851
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INFO USMISSION BERLIN
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USDOC FOR BEWT/TDAD (BOWIE)

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: BEXP, EAIR, UR
SUBJECT: DELAYS IN RECONSTRUCTION OF MOSCOW INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

1. IN RECENT CONVERSATION BETWEEN COMOFF AND WELL-PLACE
OFFICIAL OF MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION, LATTER BEMOANED
SLOW PROGRESS BEING MADE ON CONSTRUCTION OF NEW INTER-
NATIONAL FACILITY AT MOSCOW'S SHERMET'YEVO AIRPORT AND
ADDED HE WOULD BE MOST SURPRISED IF NEW TERMINAL WOULD BE
FULLY READY IN TIME FOR 1980 OLYMPICS. OFFICIAL BLAMED
DELAY ON SOVIET SIDE'S OBSESSION WITH OBTAINING LOWEST
POSSIBLE PRICE IN DEALINGS WITH WESTERN FIRMS. SOURCE
AGREED THAT FIRST AIRPORT CONTRACT INITIALLED LAST
YEAR WITH WEST GERMAN FIRM BERLIN CONSULT HAD BEEN A
FIASCO AS GERMAN ORGANIZATION PROVED UNABLE TO RAISE NEEDED
FINANCIAL BACKING FOR PROJECT. AS A RESULT MANY VALUABLE
MONTHS OF CONSTRUCTION TIME HAD BEEN LOST. WHILE AN
AGREEMENT HAD SUBSEQUENTLY BEEN REACHED WITH SALZGITTER,
MINCIVAIR OFFICIAL ADDED, BOTH BEING SPECIFIC, THAT
HERE TOO THERE WERE MANY WRINKLES YET TO BE WORKED OUT.
HE VOLUNTEERED THAT AGAIN CAUSE OF MANY OF THESE
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PROBLEMS WAS EXTREME SOVIET DISINCLINATION TO PART WITH
HARD CURRENCY.

2. IN ADDITION TO SHERMET'YEVO RECONSTRUCTION, MINISTRY
OF CIVIL AVIATION HAS A NUMBER OF REGIONAL AIR FACILITIES
ON DRAWING BOARDS DURING CURRENT FIVE-YEAR PLAN PERIOD.
THESE INCLUDE MODERNIZATION OF AIRPORTS AT TALLINN,

MINSK AND YEREVAN. HARD CURRENCY EXPENDITURES AT ALL THREE FACILITIES WOULD BE KEPT TO AN ABSOLUTE MINIMUM ALTHOUGH HE FORESAW MODEST EXPENDITURES FOR SPECIALIZED EQUIPMENT SUCH AS ELECTRONIC SCHEDULE BOARDS AND BAGGAGE HANDLING FACILITIES. DISCUSSIONS WERE CURRENTLY PROCEEDING WITH DUTCH FIRM AVIABRIDGE FOR EQUIPMENT FOR TALLINN AIRPORT.

3. ON QUESTION OF YAK-40 SALES TO WEST, CONTACT AGAIN WAXED PESSIMISTICALLY. THERE HAD BEEN MANY DEMONSTRATIONS TO DATE BUT FEW RESULTS, AND THIS OFFICIAL, AT LEAST, SAW FEW PROSPECTS IN SIGHT.

4. COMMENT: GIVEN DEMONSTRATED SOVIET ABILITY TO CONCENTRATE RESOURCES TO ATTAIN LAST MINUTE COMPLETION OF TOP PRIORITY PROJECTS, EMBASSY IS NOT INCLINED TO WRITE OFF LIKELIHOOD OF TIME COMPLETION OF NEW MOSCOW AIRPORT WITH CRASH CONSTRUCTION EFFORT. NEVERTHELESS, OFFICIAL'S REMARKS ARE INDICATION THAT CONSTRUCTION IS WELL BEHIND SCHEDULE.
TOON

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NNN

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